

Top 2020 Democratic presidential contenders on the Hong Kong Protests

Axios asked the top 2020 Democratic whether they publicly support the Hong Kong protestors fighting for increased autonomy from China, as well as they what they think the U.S. should do if China cracks down on the protestors with violent military force?

Their responses:

Former Vice President Biden:

The Biden campaign directed Axios to a series of his tweets, in which he said:

"The brave protestors in Hong Kong are demanding the rights and freedoms promised to them. The U.S. should be leading the free world to rally support behind them and, with one voice, defend our shared democratic ideals and the desire for liberty that beats in every heart."

Donald Trump is echoing his authoritarian heroes, again—this time using China's anti-democracy talking points to describe the peaceful protests in Hong Kong as 'riots.' It's shameful. When people suffering under oppression look to the U.S. for hope, Trump has nothing to offer.

America must defend the values that unite us—we must lead the Free World. As president, I will remind the world who we are. The United States does not coddle dictators. The United States stands up for democracy.

The extraordinary bravery shown by hundreds of thousands in Hong Kong, marching for the civil liberties & autonomy promised by China is inspiring. And the world is watching. All of us must stand in support of democratic principles and freedom."

Senator Bernie Sanders:

"Sen. Sanders believes it is the right of all people to demonstrate for their rights and a better future without fear of violence. He stands with the Hong Kong protestors. It is disgraceful, but unfortunately typical of Trump's failure to stand up for human rights and his declared affection for authoritarian regimes around the world," the campaign told Axios.

"As President, Sen. Sanders would make clear that the United States supports human rights as a goal of our foreign policy, and, as he has said in the past, would be willing to sanction foreign officials found to be involved in human rights abuses, including violence against demonstrators."

Senator Elizabeth Warren:

In addition to [Warren's tweet](#) — in which she said, "My heart is with the people of Hong Kong as they fight for their freedoms and the rule of law, even in the face of violence from their own government. The United States will always stand with those who stand up for democracy and human rights around the world," — the campaign told Axios:

"Donald Trump's tweets are in conflict with the messages being sent by his own White House and State Department. Any signal to President Xi that the U.S. might tolerate the use of force in

Hong Kong erodes trust in the United States by our regional partners and allies,” Warren’s campaign said.

“We need to work in concert with our partners and allies to make clear to China that the world is watching -- if force is used in Hong Kong there will be repercussions for China's relationships around the world.”

Senator Kamala Harris:

The Harris campaign directed us to [her tweet](#), in which she said:

“I stand with the people of Hong Kong and affirm the fundamental right of all people to peacefully protest for their rights. The President of the United States should call for the same.”

Mayor Pete Buttigieg:

The Buttigieg campaign sent Axios excerpts of his [MSNBC interview](#) on Tuesday:

“Host Josh Lederman: What do you think needs to be done right now to calm those tensions?

Well first of all, restraint on the part of the police, but also, this is a moment when American leadership really matters. You know, it is important for America to be a voice for peace, for human rights, for freedom, and for stability. But we're having a hard time doing that right now because it's not even clear whether we [have] back that at home. I would like to see much stronger American leadership on our values and you know, really call China to task for what's going on here. The whole idea is supposed to be one country, two systems, but that's not what we're seeing in Hong Kong right now and I think Americans instinctively -- we feel sympathy for these people standing up for their rights and freedoms.

Lederman: The president says he doesn't understand why he's getting some of the blame for what's happening over in Hong Kong -- also tweeting today about US intelligence suggesting China is moving troops to the border. What do you make of how President Trump is handling this situation?

Mayor Buttigieg: Well he's already made it about himself, and he's on Twitter when he probably should be in the Situation Room trying to figure out how the U.S. could, in some way, can be an effective voice for stability and de-escalation over there before this becomes an even bigger regional security problem -- and before people standing up for their values, just as we would, come to harm”.

The campaign also pointed Axios to [this tweet](#), in which Buttigieg said:

“The people of Hong Kong deserve our support. At times like this it's important for America to be a voice for peace, for human rights, for freedom, and for stability, and as president I'll ensure that we stand up for these values.”

Former Rep. Beto O'Rourke:

"Peaceful protestors are not terrorists, and they should be neither surveilled nor attacked as such. Police brutality anywhere is unacceptable. An O'Rourke administration would advocate for Beijing to pursue a peaceful resolution to the crisis and for China to live up to its commitments in the 1984 Joint Declaration under the 'one country, two systems' framework. Beto would confront and reject the lie that the United States is controlling the protests," a campaign spokesman said.

"Trump, by handling relations with China over trade in such a ham-handed way, as well as with his regular expressions of affection for dictatorial regimes from North Korea to Saudi Arabia, has made it all but impossible for him to be a clear voice for human rights in China. Should Trump be doing more to stand up for the right to protest in Hong Kong? Yes, but at this point, it would be hard for anyone to take him seriously."

"As president, Beto would work with allies in the region and across the world to condemn any acts of violence in response to non-violent protests, and echo the calls to both the government of Hong Kong, and the People's Republic of China to uphold the rule of law and the right of the people of Hong Kong. He would support Rep. McGovern's legislation to halt the sale of munitions and equipment to the Hong Kong police and support the application of Magnitsky sanctions to those perpetrating human rights violations."

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand:

"Hong Kong protesters are standing up for their legal rights, their freedoms, and their ability to elect leaders without the influence of Beijing, and I support them. It's clear that Hong Kong needs a peaceful resolution, and the United States must send a loud and clear message of support for the people of Hong Kong and against repression by China. This is yet another example of Donald Trump shrinking in front of an autocrat, and we need a president who will restore American global leadership and promote democracy," Senator Kirsten Gillibrand told Axios.

Senator Cory Booker: Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Andrew Yang: Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Senator Amy Klobuchar: Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard: Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Former HUD Secretary Julian Castro: Did not respond to multiple requests for comment.